

THE
CHARACTER
OF A
PRINCE.



L O N D O N :

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THE
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OF
PRINCE



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The Character of a Prince.

THere are four Virtues properly called Regal, which are *Piety*, *Prudence*, *Valour*, and *Justice*, and if a Prince hath not a share of them, he will hardly answer the Expectations of his People, nor the Ends of Government; but he may be flattered into four Vices as like them, which will utterly undo him and his Subjects too; and that is if his Biggotry be called *Piety*, his timorous Cautiousness and unsteady Steering *Prudence*, his Rashness and Obstinacy *Valour*, and his Severity and inhuman Stiffness *Justice*.

True *Piety* in a Prince is a sense of God Almighty's Providence and Justice, a Submission to the eternal Law of Equity, a Knowledge of his own mortal Condition and Frailties, and a desire to keep the Bonds of Union entire between all his Subjects. As for this or that Party in Religion, he must see it be Religion and not Faction, and so far indulge it, as Conscience may be satisfied and Ambition disappointed: This can be done by none, but by one who has been bred up in some acquaintance with Moderation, and has
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not sworn to advance a Party. Christian Religion has been too far clogg'd by Ornament, Superstition, Superstructure, Impositions, unnecessary Questions, and more unnecessary Determinations, ever to hope that any one Party shall subdue the other by Argument or dint of Reason so as to bring them over; then there remains nothing but Force, which is of such ill consequence, that it is the only way to banish all sense of Religion out of the World: Therefore a mutual Forbearance, an Allowance or permissive Indulgence to Mistakes or Pre-possessions, is all that is left, and more than this Man can not invent with any good meaning to his Fellow-Creature. A Prince who has been used to this, who is not startled at Names, who desires to be a Father to his People, and not a Tool to his Priests, is the Prince that *England* wants.

Prudence, tho' of so large an extent, as to seem to include all Virtues. *Nullum numen abest si sit Prudentia*: yet it properly means in a Prince, that admirable forecast of Events, that dexterous Ren-counterling of Accidents, that sagacious discovery of secret Machinations both at home and abroad, so as to prevent them in their birth, and above all, the understanding of the Interest that his People is engaged in by their Circumstances. A Nation is composed of private Men, all brought up very near in the same Customs, and instructed
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much by the same sort of Teachers: the Prince must take them as he finds them. He that would introduce Monarchy into *Holland*, which will drown for Liberty at any time, or settle a Republick in *France*, which will and does as eagerly fight for Slavery, will have a Task of no small performance. *England* has always been the Trimmer between these extreams; and tho that be a troublesom Office, and sometimes may be unable to keep all steddly, yet the inconvenience is soon felt on either side, and as soon remedied by the weight of Interest: But a wise Prince will easily keep the Contenders quiet, if he reflects, he can only be safe by preventing the excess; they who would make him Absolute, would kill him with kindness, make him debase Human Nature, divest his Subjects of their Reason, by which alone Men can obey sweetly, and at last expose him to all the Rage and insolent Infidelity of mercenary Guards and senseless Slaves: And those who would disrobe him of necessary Power, would make him a restless Toob to ambitious Projects, incapable of protecting his People, a perpetual Martyr to Fears and Jealousies, while he would be endeavouring to perform his Office; all his Actions liable to Misconstructions, and in short, put him into so regular a Diet, that the least good Meal of Fruition in Power would prove a Surfeit. Therefore
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the Prince we want, is one accustomed to the ambitious Projects of others, us'd to preside in popular Assemblies, that so fathoming the Depth of human Combinations, he may see the danger of giving colourable Pretexts by arbitrary Proceedings, and likewise avoid splitting upon the Sand of too much Confidence in his own Judgment and Management. In short, he that has managed great Councils, will never be managed by little ones, and so never drawn aside from his People.

Valour is so essential a Quality in a Prince, that it is part of his being. *Omnia sunt Gladii pedissequa*; and the Sword is delivered to him by a more divine Commission than any other of his Attributes. God allowed the Plea in his own People, when they rejected the Government of the Priesthood, to demand one to lead them in and out to Battel. Since the peaceable Principles of Christianity, which endeavoured to tame the ferocity of Heathenism, have not been able entirely to banish Arms and War, and that at least defensively, it must be allowed; 'tis most certain, that a Prince without *Valour* is not to be relied upon for Protection: and tho of late perhaps some have troubled the World without that personal Quality, yet our Nation will always have a profound Veneration for one who shall head it in glorious Actions. What will they have then for a Hero, who from his first Manhood
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has withstood the torrent of impetuous Invasion? who has in the midst of Fire and Smoak preserved all the Security and Calmness that Men have at leisure hours, and yet shewed all the Spirit and Conduct that Danger required. There goes a great deal to the making of a General, but much more to have a Sovereign be eminent in Generalship; and when such a Prince falls to a Nations lot, they may boldly hope to find respect in the remotest parts of this habitable World, particularly having Fleets to carry the Glory of their Prince to the Antipodes.

Justice is the finishing of that true Picture of God Almighty, a Prince; that which makes him look lovely in the Eyes of all his Subjects, from the highest to the lowest; but it must be tempered with *Mercy*, which is properly the Justice of his own Nature, the other is the utmost result of human Reason into Rules called Laws, of which the Prince is the Guardian, and ought particularly to watch the Administration of them, for they cannot be strained or slackened without a jarring in the Harmony of Government. At this most admirable Qualification are levelled all the Batteries of the Rapacious or the Flattring: Here they place Infallibility, and would have the Prince believe that his Will is the Fountain-Head, that all the Streams may take what Channel he pleases, and this that
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some of them may be diverted to their use. Few Men trust to Merit, most to Favour, that makes them strive for Power, and make it uphold its own Extravagancies; even with the hazard of the Princes safety and the Peoples quiet: And so unhappily fertile are unjust Acts, that they beget one another, and like the Plagues of Egypt, do but harden Hearts: Nothing can so soon overturn a Government as the want of Justice. Politick Bodies are never dissolved till they are in a state of War, and they are never so, till every Man is his own Carver, for want of an equal distributive Power.

A Prince therefore whose Birth and Education has been in a Country where Laws flourish, and Property is sacred, whose Nature is just, and Temper merciful, who has refused Sovereign Power, because he would be true to his Trust, who has over-worn Fears and Jealousies, where they were supported with specious Pretences and foreign Assistances, who has gained his Enemies, reconcil'd his Opposers, and powerfully protected his Friends, that Prince, if we are wise, may make us happy.

F I N I S.